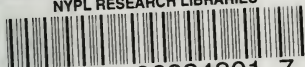


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Simeon



THE OFFICES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

FOUR SERMONS

PREACHED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,

IN THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER, 1831.

BY THE

Rev V. CHARLES SIMEON, M. A.

SENIOR FELLOW OF KING'S COLLEGE.

(Episcopals.)

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SERMON I.

ROMANS VIII. 9.

If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

ON a remote occasion, similar to the present, I endeavoured to set forth, in this place, the Law; and on a subsequent occasion, the Gospel. These two subjects, taken together, form a whole, so far as relates to Christianity *as a system*. But for the full development of our holy religion, *in its spiritual operations and practical results*, the office of the Holy Spirit should be separately and distinctly considered. This part, therefore, it is now my intention to supply. But, in entering on a subject so deeply mysterious as this, I may well ask, “Who is sufficient for these things?” Besides, in reference to it, there is a still further ground of discouragement, arising from the opposition which the subject itself meets with in the

human mind. To a person who has never experienced any thing of a work of grace upon his own heart, the work of the Spirit appears to be little better than an enthusiastic conceit; and when pressed upon his conscience as a matter to be experienced at the peril of his soul, it excites, I had almost said, a feeling of indignation, inasmuch as it requires of him a greater degree of submission to God than he is willing to yield, and a closer intercourse with God than he has any inclination to attain.

I think this admits of an easy illustration. It is an indisputable fact, that we are, by nature, altogether alienated from the life of God. Now we all feel, that, when alienated from a fellow-creature, however we may bear with him in a crowd, we are indisposed to have much personal intercourse with him alone. So also we feel in reference to God. We can hear of him at a distance, and not be disturbed; but, by reason of our alienation from him, we are averse to be brought into very near communion with him. We can bear with a display of his perfections *in the universe*, because, though we see him *as our Creator*, he is not sufficiently near us to exercise any material

control over us: but when he is brought nigh to us *in the Law*, as *our Governor*, we feel somewhat of a painful constraint, because of our responsibility to him, and the account we must one day give of ourselves to him at his tribunal. Let him then be brought still nearer to us *in the Gospel*, as *our incarnate and suffering God*, and our inquietude is proportionably increased; because we are made to realize more deeply the terrors of his wrath which demanded such a sacrifice, and the personal obligation which lies upon us to surrender up ourselves unreservedly to him. But, in the offices and operations of the Holy Spirit, we are led to view him, not merely as *God, in the universe*, displaying himself *around us*; or as *God, in his church*, declaring his will *to us*; or as *God, in our nature*, interposing *for us*; but as *God, in our hearts*, dwelling and operating *in us*: and this brings him into such immediate contact with us, and requires of us such a minute attention to all our ways, that we shrink back from every part of the subject, and, for the pacifying of our own minds, cast reflections upon it, as visionary, unintelligible, absurd. I do not mean to say that there is in the minds of men a distinct consciousness of such a pro-

cess, but only that there is in reality such a process in the human mind, though men are not exactly aware of it. Men do not like to have God too near to them; and the nearer he is brought to them, the more they show their aversion to that which is the means of presenting him to their minds. Under such circumstances, I scarcely know how to enter upon the work which I have undertaken. Indeed I am strongly reminded of the feelings of St. Paul himself, when, in reference to his ministrations at Corinth, he said, "I was among you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling."* Yet, from so interesting a subject, especially whilst I judge it necessary to complete the plan which I had originally proposed, I dare not draw back. The importance of it will plead my apology, if any apology be required, for "declaring to you the whole counsel of God." Indeed, we need go no further than to the words of my text, to see the inconceivable importance of the subject which I am bringing before you. What! "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his!" What can this mean? Who is this "Spirit?" What

* 1 Cor. ii. 3.

is it to “have” him? Why is the having him so indispensable to my welfare? What must I do in order that I may get possession of him? And what must become of me, if I possess him not? I say, to any man that has the least concern about his soul, these thoughts must force themselves with an overwhelming power upon his mind. And it is in the hope that God may in his tender mercy make use of me, for the exciting and the satisfying of these inquiries, that I now address myself to this deep and comprehensive subject. But let me entreat, not only your candour, (for of that I am, from long and uniform experience, well assured,) but your prayers also, that God may enable me so to speak, as to approve myself to him; and enable you so to hear, that you may derive eternal benefit to your souls; so that both “I who sow, and you who reap, may rejoice together in heaven for evermore.”

For the unfolding of the subject, I shall endeavour to show, distinctly and separately, in my four discourses,—

- I. Who is that Spirit whom all of us, as Christians, are expected to possess.

- II. Why the possessing of that Spirit is indispensable to our being Christ's accepted followers.
- III. What that Spirit will work in us in order that we may be Christ's.
- IV. What he will work in us when we are Christ's.

And, whilst I speak, may "the word go forth with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven," and "come in demonstration of the Spirit and of power"* to the hearts of all who hear me.

I. Who is that Spirit whom all of us, as Christians, are expected to possess? The Holy Spirit here spoken of, is the Third Person of the ever-blessed Trinity. As such he is set forth in the ordinance of baptism, which is administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.† And as such he is addressed in that benediction uttered by St. Paul, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."‡

* 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. ii. 4.

† Matt. xxviii. 19.

‡ 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

In both these passages his distinct personality is recognised, and his proper Deity acknowledged. Had he been a mere *quality*, as some have imagined, it is not to be conceived that his name would have been united with that of the Father and of the Son in these solemn acts of worship. But, in fact, the whole Scriptures bear witness to him as *God*, equally with the Father and the Son. Ananias, “in lying to the Holy Ghost, lied unto *God*.”* And we, in being his temples, are the temples of the living *God*.† But, whilst in his essential Godhead he is equal with the Father and the Son, in his office he is inferior to them both, and acts, if I may so say, a subordinate part under the Gospel dispensation. And this accounts for his being called *The Spirit of the Father*,‡ and *The Spirit of the Son*,§ under which latter designation we are at this time called more particularly to consider him.

My text says, “If any man have not *the Spirit of Christ*, he is none of his.” Now it is of importance to ascertain why this name is given to the Holy Spirit. I conceive that

* Acts v. 3, 4.

† Matt. x. 20. John xv. 26.

‡ 1 Cor. iii. 17, with vi. 16.

§ Gal. iv. 6.

the following reasons may fitly be assigned for it. He is so called, I apprehend,

1. Because of his peculiar agency in reference to Christ himself.

2. Because of his subserviency to Christ in the economy of redemption.

3. Because of its being his special office to glorify Christ.

He is called *The Spirit of Christ*, 1st, *because of his peculiar agency in reference to Christ himself*. It was he who formed the human nature of Christ in the Virgin's womb. Mary was told by the angel Gabriel, that she should conceive in her womb, and bring forth a son, and call his name Jesus: and, on her inquiring of him how that saying of his should be accomplished, seeing that she was a virgin, the angel answered her, saying, "*The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.*"*

The endowments of the Lord Jesus for his

* Luke i. 35.

heavenly commission were also communicated to him from the same source; as the prophet Isaiah very distinctly foretold: “ *The Spirit of the Lord God* shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and of might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord.”* Indeed our Lord himself, when entering upon his ministerial office, purposely referred to another passage in the same prophet, expressive of the same truth, and declared to his audience, that that very Scripture was then fulfilled in their ears: “ *The Spirit of the Lord* is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”†

The solemn consecration also of the Lord Jesus to his office at the time of his baptism, was visibly attested and confirmed by this same

* Isa. xi. 2, 3.

† Luke iv. 18, 19, with Isa. lxi. 1, 2.

divine Agent: “ *The Holy Ghost* descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.”*

Further, it was “ *by the Spirit* that he was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil;”† and by that same Spirit was enabled to vanquish that mighty foe; as our Lord himself declared: “ If I cast out devils *by the Spirit of God*, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.”‡ By the same divine Agent also was he assisted in offering himself a sacrifice upon the cross; for “ *through the eternal Spirit*, he offered himself without spot to God:”§ by him also was he afterwards raised up from the grave, to which his crucified body had been consigned: “ He was put to death in the flesh, but *quickened by the Spirit*.”||

Now, as ministering thus to the Lord Jesus, from the first moment of his existence to the period of his restoration from the grave, the Holy Ghost is peculiarly entitled to the name given him in my text, “ The Spirit of Christ.”

* Luke iii. 22.

† Matt. iv. 1.

‡ Matt. xii. 28.

§ Heb. ix. 14.

|| 1 Pet. iii. 18.

But this name further pertains to him on account of *his subserviency to Christ in the economy of redemption*. Christ, as Mediator, was sent by the Father, and acted in all things as a servant to his Father,* doing nothing, and speaking nothing, but in accordance with the Father's will, and in obedience to the Father's commands. He himself says, "I have not spoken of myself; but the Father who sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak."† And precisely thus did the Lord Jesus Christ send the Holy Ghost to effect *his* will. It was by the Holy Ghost that Christ spake in the ministry of Noah to the antediluvian world, and instructed all his people in the wilderness.‡ It was by the Holy Ghost that he moved the prophets in succeeding ages to declare future events,§ and especially to predict "his sufferings, and the glory that should follow." And *in reference to this very thing*, St. Peter calls the Holy Ghost, "*The Spirit of Christ*."|| On all these occasions Christ acted by the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit, who, according to the plan fixed in the

* Isa. xlii. 1, and liii. 11.

† John xii. 49.

‡ 1 Pet. iii. 18—20. Neh. ix. 20.

§ 2 Pet. i. 21.

|| 1 Pet. i. 11.

divine counsels, was deputed to fulfil the will of Christ. This was made manifest by our blessed Lord whilst he was yet on earth: for, on many different occasions, he promised to his disciples to “*send them the Holy Ghost.*”* He told them also that the Father would send them the Holy Ghost *in his name*:† yea, in an authoritative manner, “he breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:”‡ and on the day of Pentecost, he, according to his promise, sent forth the Holy Ghost on all his disciples, as it is said: “Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye both see and hear.”§ In every thing which from that period the Holy Ghost enabled the Apostles to do and teach, he acted as the deputy of Christ, *not himself originating* what he revealed, or *speaking it of himself*, but declaring to them what Christ himself had heard and received from the Father,|| and what he, the Holy Spirit, had heard and received from Christ. Our Lord himself says, in one place—“The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but

* John xvi. 7.

§ Acts ii. 33.

† John xiv. 26.

|| John xvi. 13.

‡ John xx. 22.

the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works:"* and again, "The word which ye hear, is not mine, but the Father's who sent me:"† and then afterwards, respecting the Holy Spirit, he says, "When he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: *for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak:* and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: *for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.*"‡

But there is a yet further reason for the Holy Spirit being called "the Spirit of Christ," viz. *that to him was delegated the express office of glorifying Christ.* Our Lord, as you have just heard, said, "He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you." Accordingly we find, that all the miracles which were wrought by the Apostles for the confirming of the doctrines which they preached, were wrought by the agency of the Holy Ghost,§ and *that, too, for the express purpose of bearing witness to Christ as the true Messiah.||* It was

* John xiv. 10.

† John xiv. 24.

‡ John xvi. 13—15.

§ Heb. ii. 4.

|| John xv. 26.

“that one and the self-same Spirit who wrought all in all.”* The different graces also which were exercised by the saints for the honouring of Christ, were formed in them by this same divine Agent ; on which account they are called “the fruits of the Spirit.”† In fact, as Christ was the fountain from which, in all cases, the living water flowed,‡ and the reservoir from whence the holy oil descended through the golden pipes of divine ordinances upon all God’s waiting and obedient people,§ so in every thing which the Holy Spirit either then did, or at the present moment does, impart to men, in a way either of gifts or graces, his object has ever been the same, viz. to bear testimony to Christ, and to fix our regards on Christ, as our only and all-sufficient Saviour.

See this exemplified at the time of Peter’s mission to Cornelius. Peter commending to Cornelius the Lord Jesus as the only Saviour, whether of Jews or Gentiles, says, “To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.” Then we are told, that

* 1 Cor. xii. 7—11.

† John vii. 37—39.

‡ Gal. v. 22.

§ Zech. iv. 6, 11, 12.

instantly, “*while Peter yet spake these words,* the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word,” precisely as he had done on the Apostles at the day of Pentecost.* Thus, in all that is now revealed to the souls of men respecting Christ, or that is imparted to them as the purchase of his blood, it is communicated to them by the Spirit; so that all, without exception, must say, “We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.”†

In this mode of speaking of the Holy Spirit, we may, possibly, be thought to have made him inferior to the Father and the Son. But the inferiority is *not personal*, but *official*; not as the Sacred Three subsist in themselves, but as they sustain and execute their respective offices in the economy of redemption. As bearing what may be called a subordinate part in the mysterious work of man’s salvation, a disparity may be ascribed to him; and he may be called “the Spirit of the Father,” and “the Spirit of Christ:” but, in himself, he is equal both with

* Acts x. 43, 44, and xi. 15.

† 1 Cor. ii. 10, 12.

the Father and the Son, and is in every way entitled to the same respect, and “love,” and confidence, as they.*

Be it then remembered, that this is He, whom every Christian must have dwelling and abiding in him. St. Paul expressly calls him “*The Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.*”† And if we mark carefully the whole passage from whence my text is taken, we shall find him designated by those different names, *The Spirit of God*, and *The Spirit of Christ*, and *Christ himself*. Hear the Apostle’s words: “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that *the Spirit of God* dwell in you. Now, if any man have not *the Spirit of Christ*, he is none of his. And if *Christ* be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness; (i. e. if *Christ* be in you, though your bodies shall suffer the penalty of death, your souls shall never die.) But if *the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead* dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by *his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*”‡

* Rom. xv. 30.

† 2 Tim. i. 14.

Rom. viii. 9—11.

Now then this Spirit we must all “have;” and if we have him not, we cannot belong to Christ.

But here it will be asked, What is meant by “having” the Spirit? Are we all to possess the power of “working miracles, and speaking divers kinds of tongues?”* No: the time for such things is long since passed. That they may be renewed at the time when God’s ancient people shall be restored to his favour, and the whole Gentile world shall be converted to the faith of Christ, is probable enough: but no such power exists at this day, except in the conceit of a few brainsick enthusiasts; nor, if it did, would it have any bearing upon the subject before us. The possession of that power would not constitute us Christ’s: for we have reason to think that Judas wrought miracles, as well as the other Apostles; and yet, as our Lord tells us, he was no better than a devil all the while.† That possession of the Spirit of which my text speaks, is of such a discriminating nature, that no man who has it can fail to belong to Christ, and no man who has it not can have any part

* 1 Cor. xii. 10.

† John vi. 70.

or lot with him. The Spirit of God is promised to us, to dwell in us as in his temple; for we are to be “the habitation of God through the Spirit;”* and he is further to operate in us effectually for all the ends and purposes of our salvation, producing in us all “the fruits of goodness, and righteousness, and truth.”† His motions may not unfitly be compared with the operations of the soul in the human body. Without the soul, the body cannot perform any vital function whatever: but when that spiritual inhabitant is present with us, and discharges its proper offices, we show, by the various exercises of our mind and body, that it really dwelleth in us. Now the Spirit of God performs in the soul an office somewhat analogous to this. The soul by itself has respect only to things visible and temporal; but, when filled by the Spirit of God, it occupies itself about things invisible and eternal. And precisely as the body needs the presence and operation of the soul for the discharge of its offices in relation to this world, so does the soul need the influences of the Holy Spirit for the discharge of its duties in reference to the world to come.

* Eph. ii. 22.

† Eph. v. 9.

To a carnal mind, this may appear strange. But it corresponds exactly with what St. Paul says:—"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me.*"* And again, he says, "When *Christ, who is our life*, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."†

The particular operations of the Spirit of Christ will come under our consideration hereafter. My present object is merely to show who that blessed Spirit is, whom we are to have dwelling in us, and for what ends and purposes he is promised to us. He is none other than God himself; and, as I have said, he operates as really and effectually in our souls, as our souls operate in our bodies.

I am aware that this is a truth but little considered; a truth, the very mention of which is, by the generality of Christians, accounted visionary at least, if not impious and profane. But if this truth be not admitted, yea, and admitted too as a matter of primary importance, all that we shall have to advance, in our remaining discourses, will only create disgust. I beg,

* Gal. ii. 20.

† Col. iii. 4.

therefore, that this be duly weighed; *that the text, in conjunction with the context, be diligently studied*; and that prayer be offered by us all to Almighty God, who has promised to “give wisdom to those who ask it at his hands;*” that so our minds may be led to receive the word with candour, and our hearts be opened to embrace it. If we enter not into a candid investigation of this subject, the word will only prove a stumbling-block to our feet, and “become a savour of death unto death,” instead of being, as I would wish it, “a savour of life unto life.”† Verily there is a great fault, both amongst Christian ministers and Christian hearers, in relation to it. Ministers in general enter not, by any means, with sufficient clearness and fulness into this part of divine truth. Many, who, at the time of their ordination, have professed that they were “moved by the Holy Ghost” to take upon them the ministerial office, and have joined in that heavenly anthem,—

“Come. Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire :
Thou the anointing Spirit art,
Who dost thy sevenfold gifts impart :
Thy blessed unction from above,
Is comfort, life, and fire of love :”

* James i. 5.

† 2 Cor. ii. 16.

I say, many who have thus, in the presence of the whole church, professed their faith as in perfect accordance with our subject, in their ministrations altogether overlook it, except at the time appointed by the church for the special consideration of it ; and, even then, they touch it but superficially, and bring it forward only lest the expectation of the people, who look for some instruction respecting it, should be disappointed. And Christian hearers feel no lack, though they pass the whole remainder of the year without ever being reminded of the truth of which my text speaks ; *i. e.* of the necessity of having the Holy Ghost imparted to us in order to our final salvation. Nay, even “ masters of Israel,” of whom better things might be hoped, are yet ignorant of these things ; and, when told that they must be born again of the Spirit, too often reply, with Nicodemus, “ How can these things be ? ” * In fact, we of the Church of England, having a season consecrated to the special consideration of this subject, have, from this very circumstance, our guilt greatly aggravated. We have heard, from year to year, the declaration in my text ; and yet perhaps have never once put the question to ourselves, “ Have I received

* John iii. 9, 10.

the Holy Ghost? have I the Spirit of Christ dwelling in me? have I ever sought this gift, and earnestly implored of God to bestow it on me? have I, in the course of my whole life, so much as felt any solicitude about it?" Let this whole assembly put these questions to themselves; and then let them see in what a perilous state they are, and with what a disposition of mind they ought to come to the further consideration of this all-important subject. Indeed, indeed, I must declare, from Almighty God, that, whatever any man may think of his attainments or his virtues, he is not a Christian truly, if his soul be not a temple of the Holy Ghost. He may have many amiable qualities, but he does not belong to Christ: nor can he ever dwell with Christ in the eternal world, if Christ do not dwell in him, and abide with him, in this world.

Whence the necessity for this heavenly gift arises will be opened in our next. But I must, in the mean time, warn all, that the subject is a matter of life and death. It is not to be listened to with mere curiosity, but as a point which at our peril we must understand, and at our peril must experience. If it is of importance whether we belong to Christ or not, it is of

importance to ascertain whether we have *this evidence* of our belonging to him: for the declaration of God is unquestionable, and his decision is irreversible; nor is there any exception whatever made: “If *any* man have not the Spirit of Christ, *he is none of his.*” He may be in a high and dignified station; but he is not therefore Christ’s. He may be greatly distinguished for the variety and extent of his intellectual attainments; but he is not therefore Christ’s. He may be looked up to as a pattern of moral excellence and virtue; but neither will that be any decisive evidence of his belonging to Christ. Whoever, or whatever he may be, if he have not the Holy Ghost abiding in him, he is none of Christ’s. He may now make light of this truth; he may explain it away; he may “puff at it”* (as the Scripture speaks) with contemptuous indignation; but he shall find it true to his cost. Let me, however, hope that the minds of all shall “be opened, as Lydia’s was, to attend to what shall be spoken;”† and that “the word being received with meekness as an engrafted word, shall prove as effectual, as it is able, to save your souls.”‡

* Psa. x. 5.

† Acts xvi. 14.

‡ James i. 21.

But, whilst I would impress on all a sense of the absolute and indispensable necessity which exists for our possessing this heavenly gift, I must not close my subject without declaring, for the comfort of my audience, the willingness of Almighty God to bestow it upon all without exception. He has told us, that if an earthly parent will not refuse bread to his famished child, much less will he refuse his Holy Spirit unto them that ask him.* Nor let any be discouraged on account of their unworthiness. A more unworthy character can scarcely be conceived than that of the Samaritan woman, whose guilt, it should seem, was not a little aggravated by refusing to our Lord a draught of water; yet to her did he say, “If *thou* knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given *thee* living water.”† Let all of us then come thirsting for this water of life. Nor let any erroneous presumption be harboured in our minds, as though there were nothing peculiar in this gift; but let every one of us seek it, yea, seek it earnestly, “with strong crying and tears,” that so we

* Luke xi. 13.

† John iv. 10, 14.

may be heard and answered, and “ the Saviour
be magnified in the midst of us,”* and “ our
souls be saved in the great day of the Lord
Jesus.”†

* Acts xix. 17.

† 1 Cor. v. 5.

SERMON II.

ROMANS VIII. 9.

If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

THE Jewish religion, by the express command of its Divine Author, would not admit of any relaxation of its principles, or any departure from its established ordinances. Not only did it prohibit any connexion with idolaters, but it forbade even the mention of the name of any false god. In all its appointments, it formed so broad a line of separation between the Jews and the rest of the world, that it was considered by the Gentiles as inspiring its followers with an utter hatred of all the human race. The New Testament has, to a certain degree, shared amongst the heathen the same universal antipathy, and upon the same grounds. If the religion of the Lord Jesus would have admitted of any union with idolatry, he would have been readily

received amongst the objects of worship which the Romans venerated; and his religion, instead of being universally proscribed, would have been judged worthy of general respect. But the Apostles were commanded to preach the Gospel every where, as requiring an exclusive regard; and to enforce it with this authoritative declaration, that “all who believed and embraced it should be saved, but that all who embraced it not should be damned.”* Its doctrines were inculcated as so sacred, that “if even an angel from heaven should attempt to establish any position contrary to them, he should be held accursed.”† This inflexible spirit pervades the whole of our religion, so far as it relates to its fundamental truths. Every man must yield to it at his peril: and not to those parts only which are commended to us by our reason, but to those parts also which depend entirely on revelation, and to which reason is constrained to bow. Not to mention innumerable other passages which partake of this unbending character, I will take that which forms the subject of our present series: “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” Here is a declaration

* Mark xvi. 16.

† Gal. i. 8, 9.

so broad, so explicit, so determinate, as to admit of no qualification, no exception whatever. To it every child of man must submit; and “ whoever shall stumble over it as a rock of offence, shall be broken; and on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”* Taking for granted that you have, agreeably to my request, examined carefully for yourselves my text in connexion with the context, and that you see my interpretation of it to be correct, (for “ the Spirit of Christ,” mentioned in my text, cannot by any possibility be understood as meaning *the disposition* of Christ,) I proceed, with all humility, to the further consideration of the awful truth which I have undertaken to develop.

Now, whether we could show the reasonableness of this declaration or not, it would be our bounden duty to receive it with implicit confidence, and to regard it as the avowed and unalterable determination of the Most High. But I think it may be clearly shown, that this is by no means an arbitrary appointment, resulting merely from the sovereign will of God. It appears to be rather a declaration founded on

* Matt. xxi. 44.

the actual state of man as a fallen creature. When man was in his primeval state of holiness, he was in himself complete, and needed neither a Saviour to work out a redemption for him, nor the Holy Spirit to apply that redemption to him. But, as a fallen creature, he stands in need of both. A Redeemer is necessary for him, that he may be brought back to God; and the gift of the Holy Spirit is necessary for him, in order that he may come to Christ aright, and find acceptance with God through Christ. This need of the Spirit's influence is the part of my subject which I am now called to unfold; and I pray God, that, whilst I address myself to it with all Christian fidelity, "the word may come to every soul amongst you, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."*

Let me however first, in few words, repeat what we mean, when we say, that men must "*have*" the Spirit of Christ; for, unless we have definite ideas upon that subject, we can never fully comprehend the point which we are endeavouring to set before you.

* 1 Thess. i. 5.

It is obvious that the possession of the Spirit, which is here spoken of, must be somewhat very different from any natural or acquired endowment, since we may possess every thing which constitutes us rational and accountable beings, and yet not be Christ's; whilst on the other hand, however defective we may, in other respects, be, the possession of it will infallibly prove us to belong to Christ. If it be asked, What does this possession of the Spirit import? I answer, It is, as I showed in my last, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our souls, as his temple, and his operating in us, as a quickening and influential principle of life.

That point being determined, we shall proceed, agreeably to the plan before laid down, to show,

II. Why the possessing of that Spirit is necessary to our being Christ's accepted followers. For the elucidation of this, there are three points to be established; namely:—*first*, That all our faculties are impaired by sin; *next*, That, without an entire renovation of them, Christ can never accept or acknowledge us as his: and, *lastly*, That none but the Spirit of

Christ can ever accomplish in us this necessary work. These points being established, the reasonableness, no less than the certainty, of God's declaration in my text, will appear, to the conviction of every gainsayer, and to the satisfaction of every unprejudiced mind.

First, then, let it be remembered, That all our faculties are impaired by sin.

It is clear, that we are not *now* such as we were when we first came out of our Creator's hands. We were created, originally, "after God's own image."* Our mind was in perfect accordance with his mind, and our will with his will. There was not so much as a thought of our hearts which did not emanate from him, and had not respect to his glory. Our bodies were every way fitted to aid the soul in all its operations. Not an inclination, affection, or appetite, existed in us, but in perfect unison with the proper offices of the soul, and in subserviency to its dictates. Man's whole delight was in God alone. As far as his happiness was in any respect derived from the creature, it was God in the

* Gen. i. 26.

creature, and not the creature itself, that was the real source of that happiness: the creature was only the medium of communication between him and his God. The goodness of God was seen and tasted by him in every thing; and every object around him afforded him an occasion of admiration, and gratitude, and love. To dwell in the presence of God, to commune with him, to receive and execute every intimation of his will; in a word, to admire God *in* every thing, to adore him *for* every thing, and to glorify him *by* every thing, this was the constant employment of man in his state of innocence, and the one uniform occupation both of his soul and body.

But what of all this is now left to us? We are altogether departed from God. Every faculty of our souls, and every member of our bodies, is become depraved, so that there remains in us no part of the moral image of our God. As beings of a superior order, we still are the lords of this lower creation; and, in the exercise of this authority, we, to a certain degree, resemble Him who is the Governor of the universe.* But in

* 1 Cor. xii. 7.

righteousness and true holiness, which I call his *moral* image, we bear no resemblance to him whatever. Our understanding is blinded, so that, instead of approving God's revealed will, we turn away from it with dislike. His law, as contained in the Ten Commandments, is deemed by us unnecessarily strict; and the sanctions by which it is enforced are regarded as needlessly severe. His very Gospel, which is the result of his eternal counsels, and contains in it "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,"* is treated by us as a cunningly devised fable. To the self-righteous amongst us, it is a stumbling-block; and to those who are wise in their own conceit, it is mere foolishness. We are, both in heart and life, altogether opposed to it. In our eyes sin has no deformity, and holiness no beauty. Communion with God affords us no pleasure. Prayer and praise are exercises which are a burden to us, rather than a delight; and instead of walking in constant and familiar intercourse with God, as Adam did before the fall, we flee from him, as Adam did after his transgression, and rather hide ourselves from him as an enemy, than go forth to meet him as a friend.

* Col. ii. 3.

But “is it I who say this; or saith not the Scripture the same also?”* God’s own account of us is, that “when he looked down from heaven upon men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek after God. They were all gone aside, they were all together become filthy: there was not one that did good, no, not one.”† He further adds, that “every imagination of the thoughts of men’s hearts was only evil continually.”‡ Nor let it be supposed that this was descriptive only of some more flagrant transgressors who lived at one particular age or place: for the Apostles themselves, previous to their conversion, were of this very character, as St. Paul most candidly confesses. Speaking of those “who walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in all the children of disobedience,” he says, “Among whom we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature children of wrath, even as others.”§ And again, “We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, de-

* 1 Cor. ix. 8.

† Gen. vi. 5.

† Psa. xiv. 2, 3, with Rom. iii, 10—18.

§ Eph. ii. 2, 3.

ceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.”*

But, together with the Scripture, let me appeal to personal experience. What have been our own habits, even from our youth? Have we delighted ourselves in God? Has it been the joy of our hearts to draw nigh to him in the exercise of prayer and praise? And have we sought after the communications of his grace and the testimonies of his love, as our supreme happiness? When the question has occurred to our minds, “Who will show us any good?” has the reply of David instantly been made, “Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us?”† Must we not rather confess, that every vanity has been regarded by us with a deeper interest than our God, and every base lust been served in preference to him? Yes, we have, as the Scripture asserts, “worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for evermore.”‡ And if at any time we have been reproved for this, our heart has risen up against the will of

* Tit. iii. 3.

† Psa. iv. 6.

‡ Rom. i. 25.

God, in the very spirit of Pharaoh, when he said, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.”* And now I make my appeal to you. Is this over-stated? If any think that it is, tell me who is there amongst us whose body has at all times been in perfect subjection to his soul, so as to render a prompt and uniform obedience to its holy motions? With whom has it not rather been in a constant state of rebellion against the soul; and in whom, unless he have been renewed by divine grace, does it not, with insatiable avidity, follow yet daily its own corrupt desires? It is true in all of us, though not exactly in the same way, that the body, which was ordained to serve, exercises a tyrannic sway over the soul; and the soul, which was ordained to regulate all the motions of the body, is made a very pander to its corrupt appetites.

Now then, agreeably to what I mentioned as the *second* point to be considered, I beg you to inquire with care, and to judge with candour, whether, whilst we are in such a state, Christ

* Exod. v. 2.

can receive us, and acknowledge us as his? I think it clear, that he cannot: for *it would counteract all the purposes of God* in the redemption of the world. If we trace up, as we must, the whole work of redemption to the eternal counsels of God, I ask, To what has he predestinated his people? Is it not that they should be “conformed to the image of his Son?”* To what has he chosen them? Is it not that they may be “holy and without blame before him in love?”† Yes: to no one soul amongst us shall salvation ever be vouchsafed, but “through sanctification of the Spirit,” as well as through “belief of the truth.”‡ But how would these purposes be accomplished, if men were saved with all their corruptions unmortified and unsubdued? Besides, *it would defeat all the ends of our Saviour’s mission.* “He came to destroy the works of the devil:”§ to “redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”|| Even at the time of his conception in the womb, his name Jesus was given him as declarative of this very thing, that he should “save his people,” not *in* their sins, but *from*

* Rom. viii. 29.

§ 1 John iii. 8.

† Eph. i. 4.

|| Tit. ii. 14.

‡ 2 Thess. ii. 13.

them.* But he might as well have never come at all, if these ends are to be set aside, and mankind are to be saved without any respect to their moral character. Further, *the office of the Holy Spirit, as a sanctifier, would be altogether frustrated and superseded; yea, and the whole word of God would be invalidated and made void.* God has declared, that “the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God:”† and that “no unclean thing shall enter into his presence.”‡ But what truth would there be in these declarations, if an unregenerated man could stand with acceptance in the sight of God?

But, in fact, *an unregenerate man could not be happy in the presence of God, even if he were admitted to it.* For, how could so corrupt a creature endure the presence of a holy God; and a creature so full of enmity against God, be happy in immediate communion with him? How could a person who has never found any pleasure in holy exercises, bear to spend an eternity in duties, for which he has no taste, no fitness, no capacity? He has no meetness for heaven. He would be altogether out of his

* Matt. i. 21.

† 1 Cor. vi. 9.

‡ Rev. xxi. 27.

element there: heaven would be no heaven to him, for want of the dispositions necessary for the enjoyment of it. If “two cannot walk together on earth, except they be agreed,”* much less could the glorified saints and angels, all formed after the perfect image of their God, admit to their converse, and associate themselves with, those who bear upon their souls nothing but the image and deformity of Satan. St. Paul puts this in a very striking point of view, and appeals to us for the justness of his sentiments: “What fellowship,” says he, “hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?”†

If then Christ will not make void the eternal purposes of his Father, and the ends of his own incarnation and death—if he will not render nugatory the office of the Holy Spirit as the sanctifier of God’s elect—and if he will not so dishonour himself as to number amongst his people those who have spent their whole lives in “treading under foot his blood, and doing

* Amos iii. 3.

† 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15.

despite to the Spirit of his grace"*—in a word, if he will not exalt to his glory those who have no taste, no capacity for the enjoyment of it—I think it clear, that Christ neither will nor can acknowledge any people as his, till they have received an entire renovation of their nature, and a meetness for that glory to which he would exalt them.

Let me not, however, be misunderstood. I am far from saying that our fallen nature renders us incapable of enjoying heaven, provided we be washed from our guilt in the blood of Christ, and be renewed by his Spirit in our inward man. On the contrary, not only will the Lord Jesus Christ, in that case, receive and acknowledge us as his, but "God the Father also will rejoice over us with joy; and rest in his love, and joy over us with singing;"† and both the Father and the Son will be eternally glorified in us. But this I say, that, till we are restored to the divine image, the Lord Jesus can never have pleasure in us, nor can God the Father ever recognise us as his peculiar and redeemed people; for our Lord has repeatedly,

* Heb. x. 29.

† Zeph. iii. 17.

and in the most authoritative manner, asserted, that, "Except we be born again, we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."* If ever we would belong to Christ, we must be so renewed, as to be made, if not in act, yet in desire and endeavour at least, "pure, as Christ himself is 'pure,'"† and "perfect, as our Father which is in heaven is perfect."‡

But here arises the question, By what power can this change be effected? And I answer, (as I undertook, in the *third* place, to show,) it is by the Spirit of Christ alone that this change ever was, or ever can be wrought.

To imagine that this change is of necessity wrought in baptism, is a very fatal error. I presume not to say that God *cannot* accomplish it then as well as at any other time; nor do I deny but that God *does*, on some occasions, make that ordinance the means of peculiar benefit to the soul. But the mere administration of the baptismal rite can no more sanctify a man, than the administration of the Lord's supper can. And if a man at the Lord's supper

* John iii. 3.

† 1 John iii. 3.

‡ Matt. v. 48.

may, by receiving it amiss, “eat and drink his own damnation;”* so, by receiving baptism amiss, he may receive a curse rather than a blessing. This was actually the case with Simon Magus, who, though baptized by Philip the Evangelist, remained in the very “gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity.”† There is, doubtless, (and I wish the avowal of it to be distinctly noticed,) *a great change effected in baptism*. But it is a change of *state*, and not of *nature*. By baptism a person is admitted into covenant with God, and obtains a TITLE to all the blessings of the Christian covenant, exactly as a Jew, by circumcision, became entitled to all the blessings of the Jewish covenant. St. Paul says, “To them,” *as Israelites*, (who have been admitted into covenant with God by circumcision,) to them “pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises.”‡ But were they *therefore* renewed, and sanctified, and saved? Surely not: for the Apostle “appealed to God, that, notwithstanding their *title* to these blessings, he had “great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart”§

* 1 Cor. xi. 29.

‡ Rom. ix. 4.

† Acts viii. 23.

§ Rom. ix. 2.

on their account. So then it is with those who have been baptized: they have a *title* to all the blessings of salvation; a title which, in an unbaptized state, they did not possess. But the actual possession of those blessings can only be obtained by the exercise of faith in Christ for the justification of their souls, and by the influence of the Holy Spirit for their restoration to the divine image. To regard it in any other view, is to assimilate it to the extreme unction of the Papists, and to lead men into the most fatal error.

If, then, we do not of necessity receive a new nature in baptism, when and how are we to receive it? Can we, by any efforts of our own, form it in ourselves? I answer, No. It is called in Scripture a new creation;* and a man can no more create himself anew, than he could create himself at first. If any think that he has within himself a power to renew himself after the divine image, he has, within his own reach, the means of proving it to demonstration. Let him set about it, and accomplish it, and he will at once disprove every

* 2 Cor. v. 17.

word which the Scripture speaks respecting this matter. Our Lord says, "Without me ye can do nothing;"* and St. Paul says, that "God alone can give us either to will or to do any thing that is good;"† yea, that of ourselves "we are not sufficient even to think a good thought as of ourselves; our sufficiency for it must be of God."‡ If any man think this not true, let him try it. I readily acknowledge, that a man may correct some outward vices, and practise some outward duties; but can he bring himself to hate every kind and degree of sin, and to loath and abhor himself on account of his indwelling corruptions? Can he, without the Spirit's influence, so "mortify the deeds of the body,"§ as no longer to live after the flesh? And can he sit loose to all the things of time and sense, and "set his affections" wholly and exclusively "on things above?"|| Can he, in a word, bring himself to love God supremely, and to delight himself truly in all holy exercises? Can he further so form his soul after the likeness of Christ, as, under the heaviest trials, to indulge no other tempers than those which he manifested, and willingly to lay down his

* John xv. 5.

† Phil. ii. 13.

‡ 2 Cor. iii. 5.

§ Rom. viii. 13.

|| Col. iii. 2.

life, as he did, and as every follower of Christ must be ready to do,* for the honour and glory of his God? Let him do these things by any power of his own, and we will at once acknowledge the erroneousness of our present statement. But the more diligently the attempt be made, the more deeply will any man be convinced, that he must have the Spirit of Christ; and that, without the renovating influences of that divine Agent, he can never become one of Christ's peculiar and approved people. The Spirit of Christ must "open the eyes of our understanding."† The Spirit of Christ must "renew us in our inward man."‡ The Spirit of Christ alone can so reveal the Saviour to us, that, with any measure of true affiance, we should "call him Lord."§ No other power than his can ever assimilate us to the risen Saviour, enabling us to die unto sin, and to rise again unto righteousness.|| Nothing, I say, but the mighty working of that power that raised Christ himself from the dead, can effect this change in us; and consequently, the assertion in my text is clearly proved, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

* Luke xiv. 26.

† Luke xxiv. 45.

‡ 2 Cor. iv. 16.

§ 1 Cor. xii. 3.

|| Eph. i. 17—21.

Let it then be borne in mind, that, as this is not a mere arbitrary appointment of the Deity, so neither is it an enthusiastic conceit. It is a decision of the Most High, arising out of the necessities of our nature, and proceeding from the boundless riches of his grace, which has made such an astonishing provision for us.

I hope I may now consider this point as proved, and may henceforth assume it as an acknowledged truth, that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's influence is founded on the state and character of every living man. Indeed, if my statement upon this part of my subject have failed to carry conviction along with it, all that I shall have to bring forward in my two remaining discourses, will appear destitute of any solid foundation, and unworthy of any serious attention. It is on this account that I have devoted one entire discourse to this part of my subject. I know whom I address, and that they will justly expect to see every step of my argument made clear and unquestionable. I have great and important truths to bring before you in my remaining discourses ; and, if I show you not to your satisfaction the foundation on which they stand, I cannot hope, or

even wish, at any time, and least of all in these days of fanaticism and folly, that they should be favourably received by you. “I speak as unto wise men; and I call upon you to judge what I say.”* But I do hope, that the words which I have delivered, have carried conviction along with them. And if any doubt remain on the mind of a single individual, I call upon him to study well the state of his own soul before God. If any one of you think himself not so fallen as I have represented, let him examine well the Scriptures, and compare with them the whole of his past life. Or, if he think he can restore himself to God’s image by any power of his own, let it be seen that he can do so, and let him prove it by an actual appeal to fact. Or if, in the failure of these endeavours, he is disposed to maintain that he has no need of such a transformation of soul as I have spoken of, then let him inquire diligently, and see, whether there be not, on God’s part, an insurmountable obstacle to his admission into heaven in an unrenewed state; and also, whether, if admitted into those blissful mansions, there would not be on his part an insuperable impe-

* 1 Cor. x. 15.

diment to his enjoyment of them; and whether that be not true, which our Lord declared to the obstinate and unbelieving Jews, “Whither I go, ye *cannot* come.”*

But none of you will ever be able to satisfy yourselves on any one of these points. If you could establish any one of them, you would set aside the authority of the inspired volume, and disprove at once the whole of Christianity. But if you acknowledge, as you must, the truth of our preceding statement, then set yourselves immediately to make a due improvement of all that you have heard. Beg of God, especially, that you may be impressed with a deep sense of your exceeding sinfulness, and of your need of the Holy Spirit’s influence to renovate your souls. And do not rest in a mere outward acknowledgment of your guilt and helplessness, but cry mightily to God, and “give him no rest”† till he bestow his Holy Spirit upon you. Nor harbour a thought of delaying this work to “a more convenient season:”‡ for, who can tell whether that more convenient season shall ever arrive? More especially now that God’s judg-

* John viii. 21.

† Isa. lxii. 7.

‡ Acts xxiv. 25.

ments are so visibly, and with such rapid strides, traversing the earth, and may, for ought we know, be even already at our doors; who can tell, whether even a single day may be allowed you for repairing your present neglect, and for acquiring that renovation of soul which you so greatly need? Indeed, this is no time* for any of us to delay our preparation for death and judgment. On the contrary, the very circumstance of the proximity of danger should give tenfold energy to our endeavours; since, in the event of any sudden seizure, a consciousness of having experienced this change would tend to tranquillize our minds, and by disarming death of its terrors, to counteract the effect of disease itself, which would otherwise gather strength from the fears that were excited by it.

I mean not, however, to be an alarmist on these matters: but on the matters of eternity I am an alarmist, even as the Apostle Paul was; and “knowing,” as he did, “the terrors of the Lord, I would persuade men;”† yes, I would persuade every one amongst you, old and young,

* Nov. 13, 1831, when the cholera had actually begun to show itself at Sunderland.

† 2 Cor. v. 11.

rich and poor, learned and unlearned, to “flee from the wrath to come,”* and to “lay hold on eternal life.”† I ask every one here present, Is my text true, or is it not? If it be true, what is it less than madness to waste the time now afforded you for obtaining the gift of God’s Holy Spirit, and securing thereby the salvation of your souls? It will be too late to repent when we are taken hence, or to “ask for even a drop of water to cool our tongues;”‡ when now, if we would but cry to God, we might obtain “rivers of living water.”§ Were we but in earnest, no soul amongst us should be suffered to seek this gift in vain. Our blessed Lord has promised his Holy Spirit to us; yea, he has himself received this heavenly gift on purpose that he may bestow it upon us.|| But, however free his promises be, “he will be inquired of by us,” before he will perform them.¶ The promise runs, “Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”** Let us then, in dependence on this promise, entreat of God to give us, in the

* Matt. iii. 7.

† 1 Tim. vi. 12.

‡ Luke xvi. 24.

§ John vii. 38.

|| In Psalm lxviii. 18, it is, “he *received*,” but in Eph. iv. 8, “he *gave*.” He *received* in order that he might *give*.

¶ Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

** Matt. vii. 7.

first place, his Holy Spirit as a “spirit of grace and supplication;”* and then, in answer to our prayers, to “pour out his Spirit, even as it were in rivers and floods upon us;”† that so there may be accomplished in us that good work, which it is the Spirit’s office to perform, by renovating our souls, and “causing us to walk in God’s statutes, and to keep his judgments, and do them.”‡ Then, having obtained this inestimable gift, let us be careful to improve it aright, never “resisting his holy motions,”§ lest we provoke God to “withdraw his Spirit from us,”|| and with holy indignation to swear, that “his Spirit shall strive with us no more;”¶ and that “we shall never enter into his rest.”**

The most important parts of my subject must of necessity be deferred to the remaining opportunities of addressing you. This, which I may call only a prefatory part, I will conclude with that beautiful Collect of our Church, in which the whole that has been brought before you is thus briefly and piously expressed: “O

* Zech. xii. 10.

† Isa. xlv. 3.

‡ Ezek. xxxvi. 27.

§ Acts vii. 51.

|| Psal. li. 11.

¶ Gen. vi. 3.

** Heb. iii. 11.

God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee; grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”*

* Collect for Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.

SERMON III.

ROMANS VIII. 9.

If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

IN our two preceding discourses, we touched on points necessary to be considered in order to a just apprehension of our subject; but they were rather of an introductory nature, than a direct unfolding of the subject itself. We now come to that which is of prime importance, and in which our present and eternal interests are most deeply involved; namely, the work which the Holy Spirit accomplishes in men, in order to their becoming the people and the property of Christ. And in our statements we will exercise all imaginable caution—not, on the one hand, to fall short of what the Scripture indispensably requires; nor, on the other hand, to strain any requirement of Scripture beyond what it plainly and incontrovertibly imports:

for if, on the one hand, we are bound, at the peril of our souls, not to withhold any thing that can be profitable to you ; so we are extremely anxious, on the other hand, not, by carrying any part of our subject to excess, to “ make sad the heart of any whom God would not have made sad.”*

In prosecution of the plan before laid down, I now come to state,

III. *What the Holy Spirit will work in us in order to our being Christ's.* And here I shall comprehend the whole in those three acknowledged duties—repentance, faith, and obedience. I say then, that in order to bring us to Christ, the Holy Spirit will—*first*, Convince us of sin ; *secondly*, He will reveal Christ to us, as the appointed and only Saviour ; and, *thirdly*, He will lead us to an unreserved surrender of ourselves to God, in a way of holy obedience.

First—He will convince us of sin. This is the first work of the Spirit in bringing us to Christ ; and till this is accomplished, we neither

* Ezek. xiii. 22.

are, nor can be, Christ's. Of this work, there is not any real experience in the natural man. He may have, as we often see, a spirit of bondage; which appears from the apprehensions which men betray in the prospect of death and judgment: but as for any real humiliation, he has it not; nor can he form it in himself by any power of his own. It is only when Christ sends his Holy Spirit into our souls, that this great preparatory work is accomplished in us. It is that heavenly Agent alone, that can "take away from us the heart of stone, and give us an heart of flesh."* Hence our blessed Lord has promised to send his Holy Spirit for this very end: "I will send the Comforter unto you; and when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin."†

Now, the Holy Spirit will convince us, not of the mere existence of sin, for nobody can be ignorant of that; but of the *extent and heinousness* of our transgressions. In order to this, he will discover to us *the spiritual import of the law*. Whilst in a natural and unconverted state, we have little notion of the law, except as it

* Ezek. xi, 19.

† John xvi. 7, 8.

appears in the mere letter. But the Holy Spirit will show us, that it extends to every motion of the heart; that an angry wish is murder; and an impure look, adultery;* and an inordinate desire after any thing whatever, is a violation of the tenth commandment.† Thus he shows us that our sins, which to the generality appear only as the stars in a cloudy night, few, and at a great distance from each other, are, in reality, like the stars in the brightest hemisphere; or rather, like the stars in the clearest night, viewed through a telescope of the largest power, when their numbers (the number of our sins) exceed all that we could ever have imagined; forming, as it were, one continuous mass through the whole space of our lives.‡ *The various aggravations* of our sins are then, also, brought to light, and are revealed to us as *the vilest ingratitude* towards our heavenly Benefactor; *the most injurious rebellion* against our almighty Creator; and *the most inconceivable folly*, as destructive of our eternal welfare.

We are apt, for the pacifying of our own minds, to balance our virtues against our faults.

* Matt. v. 21, 22, 27, 28.

† Rom. vii. 7.

‡ Psa. xl. 12.

But the Holy Spirit, by applying the law to our consciences, and showing us the extent of its demands, makes us to see that our brightest virtues are, in fact, but splendid sins, falling, as they do, infinitely short of that perfection which the law requires of us. Thus the Holy Spirit shows us, not only the depth of our guilt, but the awfulness of our desert; and that, if we die in an unpardoned state, we have nothing to expect at God's hands, but wrath and fiery indignation.

But, in addition to all this, there is one sin in particular of which the Holy Spirit will convince us, and which is especially referred to by our Lord—the sin of unbelief. Our Lord says, “I will send the Comforter to reprove the world of sin, *because they believe not on me.*”^{*} Now this is a sin of which the unconverted man makes no account. If he think of it at all, it is rather in extenuation than in aggravation of his other sins. He considers unbelief rather as his misfortune than his fault. He never once suspects that there is in him a corrupt bias, and an evil heart of unbelief; and that

^{*} John xvi. 7—9.

these are the main causes of his departing from the living God.* Nor is he at all aware, that his unbelief owes its origin to the corruption of his heart, and not to any want of clearness in the things revealed.

God has sent his only dear Son into the world, to reconcile sinners unto him, by his own obedience unto death. He has also given most abundant evidence of this, such as must of necessity convince any dispassionate and candid mind. And he invites all the children of men to accept of mercy in this his appointed way. The heathen, who have never heard of this merciful provision made for them, are not accountable for their neglect of it; but we, who have been instructed in the knowledge of Christ, and who profess to be followers of that Divine Saviour, have “made light of these things,” and are utterly inexcusable for not having inquired more fully into the mystery of redeeming love, and for having practically said, “We will not have this man to reign over us.”† Now, when the Spirit of God brings this to our view, it appears the very summit of our guilt and

* Heb. iii. 12.

† Luke xix. 14..

folly ; for, in fact, instead of requiting the Saviour's love as we ought, with all imaginable gratitude and self-devotion, we have done nothing, throughout our whole lives, but " crucify to ourselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."*

Thus the Spirit of God brings to our view a sense of our guilt and danger. But this is not all. He breaks the heart, and humbles it in the dust, and makes us cry out with the converts on the day of Pentecost, " Men and brethren, what shall we do ?"† *This effect is absolutely universal.* There may be a difference in the *degrees* with which these feelings are produced in different people ; but in *quality, and in effect*, they are the same in all. In all do they produce that " broken and contrite spirit, which God will not despise."‡

Now let not this work be mistaken. Where it exists, whether the person have been more or less moral, it discovers to the mind such a total alienation from God, such an entire want of the divine image, and such a hateful depravity

* Heb. vi. 6.

† Acts ii. 37.

‡ Psa. li. 17.

of heart, as makes a man to say, with the prophet, "Wo is me! I am undone:"* yea, and to exclaim with Job, "Behold I am vile; I repent and abhor myself in dust and ashes."† These may be thought to be merely particular instances, peculiar to some distinguished saints, and that they are not to be realized or expected amongst us. But the prophet Ezekiel tells us, that all of us, without exception, must "loathe ourselves for our iniquities and abominations, and *that* not only before, but after, that God is pacified towards us."‡ This is the very state which our Lord describes, when he says, that "he came to seek and to save that which was *lost*;"§ and till we know ourselves to be thus lost, we never shall come to Christ aright. We must feel ourselves, like Peter, actually sinking in the waves, and, under a sense of our perishing condition, must stretch out our hands, crying, "Save, Lord, or I perish."||

The next, the *second* work of the Holy Spirit, is, to reveal the Lord Jesus to us as the appointed and only Saviour of the world. For

* Isa. vi. 5.

† Ezek. xvi. 63, and xxxvi. 31.

|| Matt. viii. 25.

† Job xl. 4, and xliii. 6.

§ Matt. xviii. 11.

this also a divine agency is wanted, as much as for the humbling of our souls before God. We may indeed acknowledge, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the appointed Saviour; we may even contend for it as an article of our creed, and write learned dissertations upon it; but all this is widely different from that kind of view which the Spirit of Christ gives to the believing soul. It is not as a speculative truth that the Holy Spirit brings this to the mind, but as a matter of indispensable importance to every soul of man; like that of pointing out the city of refuge to a man, who, hearing the pursuer of blood rapidly gaining ground upon him, feels that he must flee with all his might, if by any means he may attain the wished-for gate of safety, before the avenger shall have overtaken him.

The Spirit of God, as our Lord himself has expressed it, “takes of the things that are Christ’s, and shows them to the inquiring soul.” He shows to us what Christ has done and suffered for a ruined world: that he has left “the bosom of his Father,”* and assumed our nature, and “borne our sins in his own body

* John i. 18.

on the tree.”* He shows us, that Christ is also a living Saviour, sitting at the right hand of God to complete in heaven the work which he began on earth; and that he is coming again in due season to receive us to himself, that where he is we may be also.† He shows us, that our blessed Lord has, in all this work, accomplished every thing that was either predicted concerning him in the prophecies, or shadowed forth in the Mosaic ritual. He shows us, that by that one offering of himself upon the cross, he has made an ample satisfaction “for the sins of the whole world,”‡ and effected a perfect reconciliation between God and man,§ so that now God can be “just, and yet a Saviour;”|| yea, he may be “just, and yet a justifier of them that believe in Christ.”¶ He shows us, that “if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.”** Convincing us, I

* 1 Pet. ii. 24.

† John xiv. 3.

‡ 1 John ii. 2.

§ Col. i. 20.

|| Isa. xlv. 21.

¶ Rom. iii. 26.

** Heb. ix. 13, 14

say, of these things, he assures us, that, if only we “live by faith on this Saviour,” and “receive out of his fulness” our daily “supplies of his Spirit” and grace, we have nothing to fear; for that work that is now begun in us shall assuredly be carried on and perfected “until the day of Christ.”* From this time the sinner builds on “Christ as the only true foundation,”† and glories in him as “all his salvation and all his desire.”‡ Even a full assurance of faith he is now enabled to exercise, under a full conviction that “there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus;”§ and that “all who believe in him are justified from all things.”||

A full assurance of *hope*, indeed, a true believer may want; but a full assurance of *faith* he must have, and should never lose. *Faith*, being founded simply on the truth of God, should never vary, under any circumstances whatever; but *hope* is founded partly on the promises of God, and partly on a consciousness that we are in that state to which the promises are made, and therefore it *may* vary, yea, and *should* vary, according to the progress we have

* Phil. i. 6.

† 1 Cor. iii. 11.

‡ 2 Sam. xxi. 5.

§ Rom. viii. 1.

|| Acts xiii. 39.

made in the divine life, and the meetness we have attained for the heavenly inheritance. *Faith* is a *duty*, and can never be too strong; *hope* is a *privilege*, and should rise or fall according to circumstances. The want of an assured *faith* is sin; the want of an assured *hope* may, indeed, argue a low, or even a sinful state; but it is in itself rather a duty than a sin, provided we are not in a state that warrants such a hope. Strong faith will, doubtless, for the most part, generate a lively hope, and render it as influential for our safety as it is conducive to our comfort. Hope is, in fact, the daughter of faith; and, when grown to maturity, will perform the same offices as faith, “purifying the heart after the Saviour’s image,”* and “saving the soul,” both with a present and an everlasting salvation.† This distinction between faith and hope is necessary for our comfort, and should be particularly borne in mind by those who minister in holy things; for many, from confounding the two, are adverse to the doctrine of a full assurance of faith; whilst many, from the very same cause, are induced to write bitter things against themselves without

* Acts ix. 15, with 1 John v. 3.

† Rom. viii. 24.

any just occasion for their disquietude, apprehending that their *weakness of hope* argues, of necessity, *a want of faith*. But a person may have strong faith, whilst yet he is very far from an assured hope. The Canaanitish woman, who was repeatedly rejected by our Lord as an unfit person to enjoy the blessing which she solicited—(“ I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;” * “ I cannot take the children’s bread, and cast it unto dogs,” †)—showed, by her persevering importunity, that her faith in Christ was strong; and therefore our Lord commended her, saying, “ O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” ‡ This, then, I have spoken, lest any, because they have not an assured *hope*, should think themselves destitute of a saving *faith*. If our faith in Christ be simple and entire, “ we shall be saved by him with an everlasting salvation.” §

If it be thought that this knowledge of Christ is attainable by any human efforts, let the Apostle’s declaration be borne in mind: “ By grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not

* Matt. xv. 24.

† Matt. xv. 26.

‡ Matt. xv. 28.

§ Isa. xlv. 17.

of yourselves : *it is the gift of God.*”* And he elsewhere tells us, that “ *it is given to us to believe in Christ.*”† It was “ by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation that any of old attained the knowledge of Christ ;”‡ and it is by the same divine Teacher that we must all be brought to him at this time ; as it is said—“ All thy children shall be taught of God :”§ and again, “ No man can come unto me except the Father who hath sent me draw him.”||

But I observed, that the Spirit of Christ yet further (in the *third* place) enables the believer to devote himself wholly and unreservedly to God. This is as necessary as either of the former. In fact, without this, where it can be effected, the others, even if they could exist, would be of no saving benefit to the soul. An entire surrender of the soul to God is that for which the graces of penitence and faith are given. But this also is the work of the Spirit, and can never be wrought by any finite power. The man now possesses “ a divine nature,”¶ totally distinct from that which he brought into the world with him. He is altogether “ a new

* Eph. ii. 8.

§ John vi. 45.

† Phil. i. 29.

|| John vi. 44.

‡ Eph. i. 17.

¶ 2 Pet. i. 4.

creature ;”* made so by him who created him at first, and “breathed into him a living soul.”† And can there be any doubt by whom this change is wrought? Let the Apostle’s testimony determine this point : “ We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.”‡ And again, “ He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God ; who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.”§

I have said that the Spirit of God makes known to the believing soul the mercies of God in Christ Jesus ; and by this manifestation of God’s love he constrains the believer to “ give himself up, a living sacrifice to God ;”|| and, from a consciousness that “ he has been bought with a price, to glorify God with his body and his spirit, which are his.”¶ From this time, the man enters on a new course, mortifying the whole body of sin, and crucifying all his corrupt affections ; as it is written, “ They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.”** From this time also, all the fruits of the Spirit are brought forth by him,

* Gal. vi. 15.

§ 2 Cor. v. 5.

** Gal. v. 24.

† Gen. ii. 7.

|| Rom. xii. 1.

‡ Eph. ii. 10.

¶ 1 Cor. vi. 20.

and he progressively abounds in “all the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”* Holiness, in all its branches, is now the chief desire and delight of his soul. “By walking in the Spirit, he is kept from any desire to fulfil the lusts of the flesh.”† “He can no longer commit sin, as he once did, because he is born of God.”‡ Were it possible, he would become “holy, as God himself is holy.”§ His continual prayer is, that “the God of peace would sanctify him wholly; and that his whole body, soul, and spirit may be preserved blameless unto God’s heavenly kingdom.”|| As for the world, and all its vanities, he is crucified to it “by the cross of Christ; and the world, even in all its most attractive graces, is as a crucified object to him.”¶ The relation between him and the world, like the tie of a departed relative, is dissolved;** and though *in* the world, “he is no more *of* the world, than Christ himself was of the world.”†† To walk before God, and with God, and to “maintain continual fellowship with the Father and the Son,”‡‡ is now his one

* Phil. i. 11.

§ Lev. xix. 2.

** Rom. vii. 4.

† Gal. v. 16.

|| 1 Thess. v. 23.

†† John xvii. 16.

‡ 1 John iii. 9.

¶ Gal. vi. 14.

‡‡ 1 John i. 3.

ambition, his one pursuit. And it is only in proportion as he has attained this change, that he has any evidence that he belongs to Christ. In this way, allowing only for circumstantial varieties in different cases, the Holy Spirit completes in men the three different works which I mentioned, as necessary in order to our becoming Christ's.

I know that there are some who would call this a legal statement. But I have no hesitation in saying, that it is the statement which is found in every page of the inspired volume; and that no part of it can, by any means, be dispensed with. If we be not penitent, we can never come to Christ aright; if we rely on any thing but his meritorious blood and righteousness, we can never be accepted of him; and, if we yield not ourselves up to him in a way of holy obedience, he will never acknowledge us as his. The same Scripture which says, "Except ye repent, ye shall all perish,"* says also, "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him;†" and still further adds, "Without holiness, no man

* Luke xiii. 5.

† John iii. 36.

shall see the Lord.”* Now no true disciple of Christ would wish any one of these demands to be waved, or softened down in any respect. He would most gladly comply with them all. He would assign no measure to his penitence, no bounds to his faith, no limits to his obedience. In actual attainment, it is true, he has many defects, and much that affords him occasion for grief and shame: but in heart and mind, he is like-minded with God; and he can appeal to God, that he would regard a perfect conformity to his revealed will as a very heaven upon earth.

Now comes the question which it behoves every one of us to put to himself with all sincerity—WHAT EVIDENCE HAVE I THAT I AM CHRIST’S? Has the Spirit of Christ actually wrought these things in me? Does my conscience bear me witness that I am deeply penitent before God; and *that* not merely on account of some flagrant transgression which I may have committed, but for the indwelling corruptions of my heart, and all the defectiveness of my very best duties? Do I take the

* Heb. xii. 14.

law as my rule of judgment, and feel that I have need, in reference to every one of the commandments, to pray from my inmost soul, "Lord, have mercy upon me for my past violations of *this* law, and incline my rebellious heart to keep it in future?" Can I also appeal to God that I do flee to Christ for refuge, renouncing utterly every other ground of hope, and "determining to know nothing, and rely on nothing, for my acceptance with God, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified?"* Do I look with a holy jealousy and indignation on every thing that would divide with him the honour of my salvation; and is this the most rooted and habitual sentiment of my heart, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ?"† Further, does "the love of Christ constrain me to live, not to myself, but to Him who died for me and rose again;"‡ and does my whole walk, both in public and private, bear witness for me, that I live only for God and for eternity; and that all my other pursuits, of whatsoever kind they be, are subordinated to this, and made subservient to it? Let it be remembered, I am not now asking

* 1 Cor. ii. 2.

† Gal. vi. 14.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

whether we do these things *perfectly*; but whether we do them *sincerely* and *habitually*; and whether every deviation from this heavenly course be a source of grief and shame to us; yea, whether we are “labouring after perfection,”* though we know we are not able to attain it? Moreover, is all this manifest to those around us, and especially to those who are most conversant with us in our daily walk? Do they see, and can they testify in our behalf, that this is indeed the constant habit of our minds, and the uniform tenor of our life? Do they see a marked difference between us and the world around us; and that we are, in fact, “lights in a dark world, holding forth in our conversation the word of life;”† and proving to every beholder the truth of our profession by the consistency of our conduct? Let us not put away from us these searching inquiries; let us not turn away from them as though this change were unattainable, or as though we could be saved without it. Let us remember what is at issue, and how deeply we are interested in it. *I want to know whether I am Christ’s: I want to know whether, if I were to die this day, Christ would acknowledge*

* 2 Cor. xiii. 9.

† Phil. ii. 16.

me as his; or whether I have not reason rather to fear that he would say to me, “ Depart from me ; I never knew you.”*

I am aware that some will endeavour to evade these things, by saying that we require too much. Then I demand, which of these things can be dispensed with? Can repentance? Can faith? Can obedience? There is not a person here who does not know, that not one of these things can be neglected, but to the certain destruction of our souls. Again, I ask, which of these things can be wrought in us by our own power ; or for which of them is not the operation of the Holy Spirit necessary? If repentance can be wrought effectually in you by any power of your own, prove it. If faith in Christ can, prove it. If obedience to his commandments can, prove it. But be careful not to mistake the shadow for the substance. Think not that the *saying* that you possess these things, or that you intend hereafter to attain them, will suffice. You must *possess* them; you must possess them *in reality*; you must possess them *now*, if you would have any scriptural evidence that you are Christ’s, or any well-

* Matt. vii. 23.

founded hope of dwelling with Christ in the eternal world. I charge you before God, that you examine, every one of you, your present state, and that you defer not any longer the attainment of the things on which your everlasting salvation depends. Think, I pray you, *if ye are not Christ's, whose are ye?* Fearful thought! I pray God that no one amongst you may ever have to learn this by bitter experience; but that all of you may, from this moment, lay it to heart, and improve, whilst yet ye may, this day of your salvation! I tremble, lest in any of you this day of grace be terminated by death; and, when ye are vainly hoping for acceptance with Christ as his peculiar people, Satan should lay claim as *his* vassals, and possess you for ever, sad trophies of his victorious power, and wretched monuments of his malignant sway.

And now, in conclusion, may God send down his Holy Spirit upon you all, “to bear testimony to the word of his grace”* which has been delivered to you, and render it “the power of God to the salvation of your souls!”† Amen and Amen.

* Acts xiv. 3.

† Rom. i. 16.

SERMON IV.

ROMANS VIII. 9.

If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

IN entering on this closing part of our subject, I feel peculiar difficulty, not from any want of scriptural and incontrovertible materials, but from the very nature of those materials, which, being wholly of an experimental nature, can only commend themselves to those who, by actual experience, are qualified to judge of them. There are, as we all know, different kinds of life—vegetable, animal, and rational—each rising above the other, and each, in its order, evincing a manifest superiority above that which is below it. But there is a fourth kind of life, of which the Scripture speaks; viz. a spiritual life, which rises as far above the rest, as any one of them does above another. All have their proper powers, which, however,

they cannot exceed. The vegetable life has productiveness, but no consciousness nor activity. The animal life has feeling, but no perception of the deductions of reason. The rational life apprehends moral truth, but forms no just conception of things which are spiritual. The spiritual life is exercised on things that are matters of pure revelation, which reason is not of itself able to apprehend.

But I wish to guard against a common misapprehension respecting this spiritual life. It is by no means correct to speak of it as constituting a new *sense*; for then it would be a man's misfortune only, and not his fault, if he did not possess it. But it is correct to say, that the spiritual man has a spiritual *perception*, which the natural man does not possess. The merely rational man has a film before his eyes; he views things through the medium of sense, and not of faith; and the medium through which he looks at objects, distorts them, if it do not altogether hide them from his sight. But in the spiritual man, the Holy Spirit, as "eye-salve," clears away the film,* and enables him

* Rev. iii. 18.

to discern things as they really are. Faith also assists him, by bringing remote objects with greater clearness to his mind. The power of the telescope to bring to our view things that are invisible to the naked eye is well known. Now this is the office and effect of faith, which enables us, if I may so speak, to behold both God himself and the hidden mysteries of God,* and to obtain a clear perception of things which are altogether beyond the reach of the eye of sense. Hence it appears that the merely rational man labours under a twofold disadvantage in comparison of the spiritual man: he looks through a dense medium of sense, which distorts, or altogether conceals, the objects before him; and he wants that peculiar glass of faith, which would present them truly, and bring them, if I may so say, directly upon the retina of his mind. This is what St. John means, when he says, “The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not;”† and this is, in very explicit terms, declared by St. Paul to be a matter of universal experience.‡ “The natural man (whoever he may be) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for

* Heb. xi. 27.

† John i. 5.

‡ 1 Cor. ii. 14—16.

they are foolishness unto him; (being seen by him only in a distorted view;) neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned; (and he wants that spiritual perception whereby alone he can truly apprehend them.) But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, (having a clear and just perception of them;) yet he himself is judged of no man: (for it were a downright absurdity for a blind man to sit in judgment on one who sees.) For who (*i. e.* what merely natural man) hath known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct *him*, (the spiritual man?) But *we* (we who are spiritual) *have the mind of Christ;*" (and are, therefore, able to judge both ourselves and others.)

But whilst, in order to guard against misapprehension, I speak thus, I well know that there are many, very many, in the midst of us, who can form the most accurate judgment of all we say, and who, if not in relation to every *word*, will yet, *as a whole*, set their seal to the truth of it; and therefore I hesitate not to lay before you what I verily believe to be in perfect accordance with God's revealed will, though on a subject so recondite and mysterious.

I am not, however, without a consciousness, and with deep grief I utter it, that, under a profession of bringing forth only scriptural truth, some give vent to the veriest absurdities, talking about dreams and visions, and arrogating to themselves I know not what claims of preternatural endowments. But against all such fancies and conceits I would enter my most solemn protest. The truth of God, though elevated above reason, is in perfect accordance with reason: and by *its reasonableness as a part of divine revelation* would I wish every word that I utter to be tried. I ask nothing more than this; that as God, of his own sovereign will and pleasure, bestows on some greater *natural* gifts than on others, so he may act in reference to *spiritual* gifts: and that, as all our natural faculties are called forth into action by things *visible*, our hopes and fears, and joys and sorrows, being excited by them according to the interest we have in them, so our spiritual faculties may be called into action by things *invisible*, even by all the wonders of redeeming love, according as the blessings of redemption are manifested to the soul, and our interest in them is made the one subject of our present and prospective happiness.

Having premised thus much, I now come to show, in the *fourth* and last place,

IV. *What the Holy Spirit will work in us when we are Christ's.* We must never forget that the Holy Spirit unites with the Lord Jesus Christ in the whole of his mediatorial office, though each sustains and executes in a more appropriate way that part which has been assigned him by the Father: and if any of us be “washed, and justified, and sanctified, it is in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”* But it is the Spirit's office to which I must confine myself: and whilst I address myself to this arduous and momentous subject, may the Lord Jesus Christ himself “be with us,” as he has promised,† and “baptize us with the Holy Ghost and with fire,”‡ to consume the dross that is within us,§ and to kindle in our hearts an inextinguishable flame of love towards his blessed name!

The Holy Spirit then will perform in us the offices of *a Teacher, a Sanctifier, and a Comforter.*

* 1 Cor. vi. 11.

† Matt. iii. 11.

† Matt. xxviii. 20.

§ Isa. iv. 4.

Let us view him first as a *Teacher*.

The young convert knows little beyond “ the first principles of the oracles of God.”* He is like a person just landed on a newly-discovered country, the beauty and riches of which he has yet to learn. But the Holy Spirit of Christ will open things to us, even as the Lord Jesus himself did when on earth to his disciples, gradually, as we are able to bear them; and with increased knowledge he will give us “ senses proportionably exercised to discern good and evil,”† and thus will “ lead us on to perfection.”‡ The fundamental doctrine of salvation by faith is known by us when we first come to Christ. But there is much which as yet is very indistinctly seen. For instance, the nature and difficulty of the Christian warfare is yet but very partially discovered. The deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the human heart is but little known: (in fact, who but God can know it to its full extent?§) “ the deceitfulness of sin”|| also is by no means clearly discerned. As for “ the devices of Satan,”¶ the young believer is still “ ignorant of them” to a great

* Heb. v. 12.

§ Jer. xvii. 9.

† Heb. v. 14.

|| Heb. iii. 13.

‡ Heb. vi. 1.

¶ 2 Cor. ii. 11.

extent ; and of “ the wiles ” whereby that subtle adversary deludes the souls of men, he has scarcely any conception.* Little does he imagine what power that old serpent has to “ beguile the minds of the simple,”† and “ to corrupt them, even as he deceived our mother Eve, from the simplicity that is in Christ.”‡ Armour is provided for him against that great enemy of souls ;§ but he knows not yet how to use it, so as to defeat him, who is but too justly called Apollyon.|| He has in his hand “ the word, which is the sword of the Spirit ;”¶ but he knows not how to use it with effect : “ he is unskilful in the word of righteousness.”** It is not till after many conflicts that he learns what are the parts on which he is most open to assault, what are the stratagems whereby that wily adversary most successfully ensnares him, and what are the means by which he is to ensure the victory over all his assailants. In the spiritual warfare, as in that which is temporal, experience can be gained only by active service. There is however this difference between them : in temporal warfare, proficiency is the result of human in-

* Eph. vi. 11.

† Rom. xvi. 18.

‡ 2 Cor. xi. 3.

§ Eph. vi. 13.

|| Rev. ix. 11.

¶ Eph. vi. 17.

** Heb. v. 13.

genuity ; whereas, in the spiritual warfare, it is the Spirit of God alone that can inspire us with the knowledge and address whereby we are to vanquish the legions of spirits that are combined against us.*

But, further, the Holy Spirit will also discover to us the fulness and excellency of the Gospel salvation. The plan of salvation is, as I have already acknowledged, understood by the veriest babe in Christ. But the excellency of it will be more and more developed to him, till, from the obscurity of the morning dawn, he attains the fuller light of the meridian sun ; according as it is written by the prophet, “ Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord : *his goings forth are prepared as the morning ;*”† and as Solomon also has assured us, “ The path of the just is as the morning light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”‡ The young Christian knows little of that covenant to which all our salvation must ultimately be traced ; the covenant entered into between the Father and the Son for the redemption of our fallen race ; the covenant, wherein Christ, on the one

* Eph. vi. 17, 18.

† Hos. vi. 3.

‡ Prov. iv. 18.

part, undertook to stand in our place and stead, and to endure, in his own person, the penalty which we had incurred; and the Father, on the other part, both gave unto him a chosen people,* and engaged to accept them as righteous, on account of what he should do and suffer for them. “This covenant is ordered in all things, and sure:” and the blessings of it are all treasured up for us in Christ, our great head and representative,† and are thus secured to us for ever: as it is written, “Our life is hid with Christ in God: and therefore, when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory.”‡ These blessings, too, are to be received from him§ simply “through the exercise of faith, that thus they may be sure to all the seed;”|| for no human being could ever have hoped to possess them, if they had been committed to any other depository, or if the attainment of them had been suspended on the strength and fidelity of man.

To unfold these things to the soul is the Holy Spirit’s office. For this end he is given to us as “an unction that shall abide with us,” and that

* John xvii. 2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24.

† Col. ii. 9.

‡ Col. iii. 3, 4.

§ John i. 16.

|| Rom. iv. 16.

shall, to a certain degree, by the clearness of his communications, supersede the necessity for human instruction;* and, being given to us for this end, he enables the believer gradually to dive more and more deeply into this mystery, which the human eye cannot penetrate, at least not so penetrate as to behold its excellency.† These are among the “deep things of God, which the Spirit alone searches,” even the things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived, but which are revealed to the soul by the Spirit of God,‡ and can be known in no other way.§ True, these things are written plainly in the inspired volume, even as the figures are engraven with the utmost possible plainness on the sun-dial: but both in the one case, and in the other, are they written in vain, till light is vouchsafed from heaven to shine upon them: then only does the gnomon perform its office in the one; and then only is the end answered for the illumination of the soul in the other. Till that take place, “the natural man, how learned soever he be in other respects, will never discern aright the things of the Spirit of God: they will be no better than foolishness unto him.”

* 1 John ii. 27.

† Eph. i. 17, 18.

‡ 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.

§ 1 Cor. ii. 11, 12

The believer, thus taught of God, has a knowledge of the Deity, of which he had scarcely the slightest notion before. What astonishing views has he of the wisdom of God in devising such a plan, whereby God's own justice might be duly satisfied, and his mercy flow down to man in perfect consistency with all his other attributes ! When he contemplates the goodness of God, thus exercised ; the holiness of God, thus honoured ; and the truth of God, thus kept inviolate ; and all the perfections of God thus harmonizing and glorified ; and all this for HIM ; he is perfectly astounded ; he knows not how to believe it ; it seems to him all as " a mere parable."* But seeing how suited all this is to his necessities, and how sufficient for his wants, and that, in any other way than this, he could find no more ground of hope for himself than for the fallen angels, he is *forced* to believe it ; he sees that it is revealed in the Bible as with a sun-beam, and established by evidence that admits not of the slightest doubt : and when he sees further, that it has a transforming efficacy upon all who receive it, he is *constrained* to receive it as the very truth of God,

* Ezek. xx. 49.

and to say, “ Lord, to whom else shall we go? Thou, even thou only, hast the words of eterna life; and we believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”*

I merely give these things as samples only of what the Holy Spirit will effect in the believing soul as a *Teacher*; for the same powerful agency is extended to every part of divine truth, and every part also of Christian experience, seeing that he is expressly promised to “ guide us into *all* truth,”† that so, by his effectual teaching, “ we may know all things.”‡

But we will next consider his operations, under the office of a *Sanctifier*. In this view we speak of him in our catechism, as “ sanctifying the elect people of God.” In fact, all that he does as a Teacher, is in order to his work as a Sanctifier. Does he “ reveal Christ in us,” so as to give us brighter views of his person, and a more comprehensive knowledge of his work and offices? it is, that “ we, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, may be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even

* John vi. 68, 69.

† John xvi. 13.

‡ 1 John ii. 20.

as by the Spirit of the Lord.”* Does he further enable us to “comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know with progressive clearness and certainty the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge? it is, that we may be thereby “filled with all the fulness of God.”† With increasing knowledge he gives an increase of spiritual perception; and with that perception, a spiritual appetite; and with that appetite, a spiritual attainment; and this continues to advance, till “the soul, with all its powers, is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”‡ I think the whole process, though above the conception of the highest archangel, may, for all practical purposes, be brought down to the apprehension of a child. Our blessed Lord compares it to the wind, which is mighty in operation, but visible only in its effects. “It blows when and where it listeth, but we cannot tell either whence it comes, or whither it goes;”§ yet of its agency we have no doubt whatever. The veriest child acknowledges it, whilst the wisest philosopher is unable adequately to explain it. The magnet would furnish us with a similar illustration of this truth; for its influence.

* 2 Cor. iii. 18.

† Eph. iii. 18, 19.

‡ 2 Cor. x. 5.

§ John iii. 8.

if not rendered visible by actual experience, would not be credited. But there is another natural process which will give us a fuller, and, perhaps I may say, a more distinct, apprehension of this mysterious subject. A river flowing from its source in one current to the ocean, may serve to show us the natural man, with all his faculties, both of body and mind, departing from God, and proceeding with fatal indifference and perseverance, till he is finally lost in that abyss from whence there is no return. But, within a certain distance from the sea, we may behold that same river arrested in its course by the tide, and returning with equal rapidity towards its fountain-head: and in that we may behold the sinner returning to his God. Even from the partial back-currents which are occasioned by local obstacles, we may behold the parallel yet more strikingly illustrated: for in either case, these may serve to show, that, as in man's departure from God, there are some risings of compunction, and some little, though ineffectual, restraints, from the remonstrances of an accusing conscience; so, in the believer's return to God, there are some remnants of corruption, which betray a want of that completeness of soul, which he will enjoy in a better world. But the

point particularly to be noticed is, How is this change effected? How is it effected in the river? Is it through the power and instrumentality of man? No: it is by the invisible, but powerful, attraction of the moon. The operation of the moon is not seen but in its effects; yet it is not on that account denied: the effects are unquestionable; nor can they reasonably be traced to any other cause; at all events, they cannot in the smallest possible degree be ascribed to man. And how is the change effected upon the souls of men? It is the Holy Spirit who operates upon them to bring them back to God. True, his operations are not seen, except in the effects produced by them: but those effects infinitely exceed all human power: and in the unerring word of God they are ascribed to the Holy Spirit, whose peculiar office it is not only to regenerate us at first, but progressively to form us after the divine image, and to render us meet for our heavenly inheritance.* That there are defects in the best of men is certain; but that only makes the analogy more complete. There are, and will be, intervening obstacles, that will, at some times, and under peculiar circumstances,

* Titus iii. 3, 5.

interfere with the believer's progress:* but these do not interrupt his general course, or give any just cause for questioning the influence under which he moves.† His habitual "walk is, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."‡ We have said, that the work is progressive. He goes from grace to grace,§ from victory to victory, "growing up into Christ in all things, till he arrive at the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."|| At first he is represented in the Scriptures as "a child, then as a young man, and then as a father:"¶ and the work in his soul is compared to the corn, which appears first in "the blade, then in the ear, and then as the full corn in the ear."** These very comparisons show, that the believer is not at first all that he will be at a future period: his heart will be more and more weaned from earthly things, and with more and more intensity be fixed on things above, till he is altogether "changed into the image of his God in righteousness and true holiness."†† This advance towards maturity will be more or less visible to all around him.

* Rom. vii. 18, 19.

† Rom. viii. 1, 5.

|| Eph. iv. 7, 13.

** Mark iv. 28.

† Rom. vii. 21—24.

§ 2 Pet. iii. 18.

¶ 1 John ii. 12—14.

†† Eph. iv. 24.

There will be in him more solidity, more uniformity, more consistency. His principles will be more and more commended to all around him by their efficacy to “beautify his soul,”* and to adorn his life.† In a word, he will be renewed, not in his mind only, but “in *the spirit of his mind*,”‡ and will become “an epistle of Christ known and read of all men,” an epistle not “written by any human hand, but by the Spirit of the living God.”§ He will be in himself, and will constrain all who know him to acknowledge that he is, what the Scriptures emphatically call, “A MAN OF GOD.”||

And what is the result of all this? What, but that *in* and *by* the whole of this work, the Holy Spirit performs the office of a *Comforter*? Under this character, “the world know him not, neither can receive him: but believers do know him; for he dwelleth with them, and shall be in them”¶ throughout the whole of their earthly pilgrimage. Even at their first coming to Christ, the Holy Spirit, in some measure, dischargeth this office, speaking peace to their troubled consciences, and enabling them to rejoice in their

* Psa. cxlix. 4.

† 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4.

‡ Eph. iv. 23.

§ 2 Cor. iii. 2, 3.

|| 2 Tim. iii. 17.

¶ John xiv. 16, 17.

unseen, but beloved Saviour.* This was eminently conspicuous on the day of Pentecost, when the whole multitude of believers, who had just before been filled with terror, “ate their bread with gladness and singleness of heart, blessing and praising God.”† But through the whole course of their future life, he carries on this work, revealing Christ more and more clearly to them, and applying the promises with sweet assurance to their souls. Hence the word so applied is said to “work by the power of the Spirit of God,”‡ and to “come to men, not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance;”§ and the Holy Ghost himself is called “the Holy Spirit of promise,”|| because in this way he makes use of the promises for their good. Thus he performs the office of a Comforter towards Christ’s redeemed people: he gives them near “access to God” in prayer;¶ and in their supplications, “helps their infirmities,”** and “makes intercession for them, and in them, according to the will of God.†† “He is in them a Spirit of adoption, enabling them to go to God with confidence,

* 1 Pet. i. 8.

† Acts ii. 46, 47.

‡ Rom. xv. 19.

§ 1 Thess. i. 5.

|| Eph. i. 13.

¶ Eph. ii. 18.

** Rom. viii. 26, and Jude 20.

†† Rom. viii. 27.

crying, Abba, Father;”* and, “shedding abroad God’s love in their hearts,”† he “witnesses with their spirits, that they are children of God.”‡ In this way, also, he establishes them in Christ,§ and “seals them unto the day of redemption,”|| and “is within them an earnest of their heavenly inheritance.”¶ “An earnest” is *a part of* a payment, and *a pledge of* the remainder; and such is the Holy Spirit in the believer’s soul, giving him already, in possession, a measure of the heavenly felicity, and assuring to him, in due season, the full and everlasting possession of it. In a season of affliction especially do the communications of his grace abound. We read of those who “received the word with much affliction, and joy of the Holy Ghost;”** and “in proportion as any person’s afflictions abound, the Holy Ghost will make his consolations to abound” with still greater and more transcendent efficacy.††

It is worthy, however, of observation, that the comforts which he administers at an earlier, and at a more advanced period, are, for the

* Rom. viii. 15.

§ 2 Cor. i. 21.

¶ Eph. i. 14.

† Rom. v. 5.

|| 1 Cor. i. 22, with Eph. i. 17.

** 1 Thess. i. 6.

‡ Rom. viii. 16.

†† 2 Cor. i. 5.

most part, widely different ; the one being rather of a tumultuous nature, the other more serene ; the one more transient, the other more abiding ; the one elevating the spirits of a man on account of the good that has accrued to him, the other humbling and abasing his soul on account of his great unworthiness : the one is as a fire recently kindled, in which there is a considerable mixture of flame and smoke ; the other like a fire that has become bright and solid, and burns with an unobtrusive, but mighty, efficacy. In confirmation of what I have said, I need only add, that this is the very description which God himself has given us of his kingdom : that it “ consists not in externals of any kind, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”*

And now, will any one say that these blessings were peculiar to the apostolic age, and are not to be expected by us ? What then is the meaning of that interrogation which St. Paul addressed to the whole Corinthian church, “ Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that *the Spirit of God dwelleth in you* ? ” †

* Rom. xiv. 17.

† 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.

And again, “ Know ye not your ownelves, how that *Jesus Christ is in you*, except ye be reprobates?”* Hence it is evident, that this is a truth, of which we must not only have the actual experience, but a consciousness also, that it is realized in us: and the man who questions it as a matter of Christian experience, has yet to learn the very first principles of the Christian faith: for even to the murderers of our Lord did St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, announce that this blessing should be theirs, and *that*, too, even to their latest posterity: “ Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”† In fact, this is the promise which was originally made to Abraham for himself and all his believing posterity, whether of the Jewish or Gentile world, even “ *the promise of the Spirit through faith.*”‡

This objection, therefore, being set aside, I confidently ask whether I have carried any one

* 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

† Acts ii. 38, 39:

‡ Gal. iii. 14.

of these matters to excess, either requiring more than the Scriptures require, or promising more than the Scriptures promise? I can truly say, that I have exercised all possible caution on this head. I know and lament, that there are crude and enthusiastic conceits entertained by some, who would have us believe that they are actuated by certain divine impulses, irrespective of the word as the medium of conveying them, and in despite of the vanity and folly which they themselves betray as their invariable result. But I trust that not one word that I have spoken can be thought to have countenanced any such conceits as these. The written word is the medium by which the Spirit works, and the standard by which his agency must be tried; and, if his operations do not produce holiness, as well as light and comfort, they are no better than a delusion, a desperate and a fatal delusion. The offices of the Holy Spirit cannot be separated from each other. He is a Teacher, a Sanctifier, and a Comforter: and I advisedly place the office of a Sanctifier between the other two, because it is equally connected both with that which precedes, and with that which follows—with that which precedes, as the end for which divine teaching is administered,

and with that which follows, as that without which no true comfort can possibly exist. I entreat, then, that you will all look for the gift of the Holy Spirit, to impart to you these blessings: and I declare before God, that no one of you will ever behold the face of God in peace, if you do not both desire and obtain the Holy Spirit for these ends. The word of God is immutable; “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

If any be disposed to deride the sacred influences of the Spirit, imputing to Satan, as it were, what is wrought by the Holy Ghost, let them beware of the sin against the Holy Ghost; for they tread close upon it, if they do not actually commit it. I would have them remember, that *in proportion to the light against which they offend, and the malignity with which they utter their scoffs, they approach this fatal sin*: and, if once they do commit it, our blessed Lord declares, that “they shall never have forgiveness, either in this world, or in the world to come; and that they are therefore in danger of eternal damnation.”*

* Matt. xii. 32, and Mark iii. 28, 29.

On the other hand, if any have experienced the workings of the Holy Spirit to bring them to Christ, let them watch and pray against temptation and sin of every kind, lest by any open or secret declension from the ways of God, they “grieve”* and “vex the Holy Spirit,”† and “quench” his sacred motions,‡ and thus “their last end become worse than their beginning.”§

But “I hope better things of this assembly, though I thus speak.”|| Scoffers do not abound at this day as once they did. The truths of the Gospel are better understood, and its mysteries are more justly appreciated: and, provided only the deep things of God be stated with modesty and sobriety, they find a favourable acceptance now, where once, perhaps, they would only have provoked a smile. On that head, therefore, I feel no occasion to dwell. But this very circumstance, which renders a profession of piety more easy, makes the danger of parting from it more imminent; since, as in the case of the stony-ground hearers, that which is hastily received, is but too often as hastily relinquished.¶

* Eph. iv. 30.

§ 2 Pet. ii. 20.

† Isa. lxiii. 10.

|| Heb. vi. 9.

‡ 1 Thess. v. 19.

¶ Matt. xiii. 20, 21.

To every one of you then I say, “ Hold fast that thou hast, that no man take thy crown ;” * or rather, look to the Lord Jesus Christ for more enlarged “ supplies of his Spirit ;” † for “ He has received this gift for men, even for the most rebellious :” ‡ and as “ God has not given the Spirit by measure unto *him*,” § so is there no measure fixed for the dispensation of it to *us*. It is our privilege, not only to “ *have* the Spirit,” but to “ *be filled with* the Spirit.” || Many of you, I would hope, “ have already received the first-fruits of the Spirit :” ¶ but be not satisfied with these. “ Christ came, not only that you might have life, but that you might have it more abundantly.” ** He has promised to “ pour floods upon those who are thirsty.” †† Yes, he would have you to “ live in the Spirit,” and “ walk in the Spirit,” ‡‡ and “ purify your souls by the Spirit,” §§ and “ abound in hope through the Spirit :” |||| and be filled with “ joy in the Holy Ghost.” ¶¶ See to it then, that you avail yourselves of these immense advantages ; and beg of God to “ pour

* Rev. iii. 11.

§ John iii. 34.

** John x. 10.

§§ 1 Pet. i. 22.

† Phil. i. 19.

|| Eph. v. 18.

†† Isa. xlv. 3.

|||| Rom. xv. 13.

‡ Psal. lxxviii. 18.

¶ Rom. viii. 23.

‡‡ Gal. v. 25.

¶¶ Acts xiii. 52.

out his Spirit more and more abundantly upon you through Jesus Christ,"* that, being "led in all things by the Spirit, ye may *be*, and give decisive evidence that ye *are*, the children of God."† And may "the Holy Spirit be so richly poured out upon us from on high, that this our wilderness may become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be so luxuriant as to be counted for a forest."‡

* Tit. iii. 6.

† Rom. viii. 14.

‡ Isa. xxxii. 15.

THE END.

The following are the names of the persons who have been
 elected to the office of the Board of Directors of the
 City of New York, for the year 1887. The names are
 given in alphabetical order, and the names of the persons
 who have been elected to the office of the Board of Directors
 of the City of New York, for the year 1887, are given
 in alphabetical order, and the names of the persons who
 have been elected to the office of the Board of Directors
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